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hashing

A process by which access to files or other information can be accelerated. It is a with an indexing function (key) that decreases the number of elements that need searched. *Hashing* is commonly used for improving access to lists such as dictionary directory lists.

Each data item to be stored is associated with a key, e.g., the name of a person. function is applied to the item's key, and the resulting hash value is used as an index in a hash table. The table contains pointers to the original items. If the hash table already has an entry at the indicated location, then that entry's key must be compared with the key of the new entry to see if it is the same. If two items' keys hash to the same value (a hash collision), an alternative location is used (e.g., the next free location following the indicated one). For performance, the hash table size and hash function must be tailored to the range of values used. Also called [hash coding](#).

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